

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for drying substrates which dries a surface of each of the substrates, comprising:
housing substrates within a processing vessel containing a cleaning fluid;
lowering a fluid face of the cleaning fluid within the processing vessel with respect to the substrates;
introducing a drying fluid under a liquid condition within the processing vessel using a nozzle with the nozzle forming individual liquid drops of the drying fluid and supplying the liquid drops onto the fluid face of the cleaning fluid such that a liquid layer of the drying fluid on the cleaning fluid is continuously maintained;
supplying inert gas into the processing vessel during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel; and
controlling the lowering a fluid face, the introducing a drying fluid and the supplying inert gas with a control section; and
determining an introduction direction of the drying fluid into the processing vessel and determining an introduction initial speed of the drying fluid so as to expand the drying fluid up to an entire width of the substrates on the fluid face of the cleaning fluid.

2. (Previously Presented) A method for drying substrates as set forth in claim 1, wherein
the method houses the substrates within the processing vessel in an inclined condition at a predetermined angle with respect to a vertical plane, and supplies the liquid drops of the drying fluid using the nozzle with the nozzle inclined at an inclination angle same as the predetermined angle of the inclined substrates.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) A method for drying substrates as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the method increases a supplying quantity of the drying fluid and/or the inert gas into the processing vessel during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

6. (Previously Presented) A method for drying substrates as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the method changes supporting positions of the substrates during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

7. (Previously Presented) A method for drying substrates as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the method makes an interior of the processing vessel an inert gas environment prior to exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

8. (Previously Presented) A method for drying substrates as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the method carries out the lowering of the fluid face of the cleaning fluid and the introducing of the drying fluid in the liquid condition at a room temperature.

9. (Previously Presented) A method for drying substrates as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the method supplies inert gas to the nozzle, and flows the drying fluid by a pressure of the inert gas which is supplied to the nozzle.

10. (Currently Amended) A device for drying substrates which dries a surface of each of the substrates, the device comprising:

a processing vessel containing a cleaning fluid;

means for supporting substrates within the processing vessel;

means for relatively lowering a fluid face of the cleaning fluid within the processing vessel with respect to the substrates;

means for introducing a drying fluid under a liquid condition within the processing vessel using a nozzle with the nozzle forming individual liquid drops of the drying fluid and supplying the liquid drops of the drying fluid onto the fluid face of the cleaning fluid;

means for supplying inert gas into the processing vessel during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel; and

means for controlling the means for supplying, the means for introducing and the means for relatively lowering and for maintaining a liquid layer of the drying fluid on the cleaning fluid,

the means for introducing the drying fluid determining an introduction direction of the drying fluid into the processing vessel and determining an introduction initial speed of the drying fluid so as to expand the drying fluid up to an entire width of the substrates on the fluid face of the cleaning fluid.

11. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, wherein

the means for supporting substrates supports the substrates within the processing vessel in an inclined condition at a predetermined angle with respect to a vertical plane, and the nozzle supplies the liquid drops of the drying fluid with the nozzle inclined at an inclination angle same as the predetermined angle of the inclined substrates.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, further comprising

means for increasing a supplying quantity of the drying fluid and/or the inert gas into the processing vessel during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

15. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth claim 10, wherein

the means for supporting substrates includes
an upper face with a plurality of supporting grooves therein, and
a cleaning fluid introduction groove which extends from a bottom section of each of the supporting grooves in a downward direction with respect to the upper face.

16. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, wherein

the means for supporting substrates is a pair of supporting members for selectively supporting the substrates at different supporting positions, and the device for drying substrates further comprises means for changing the supporting positions of the substrates during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

17. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, further comprising

means for making an interior of the processing vessel an inert gas environment prior to exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

18. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, further comprising

means for moving the nozzle towards the substrates during exhausting of the cleaning fluid from the processing vessel.

19. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, further comprising

means for circulating the drying fluid when the means for introducing the drying fluid is not introducing the drying fluid under a liquid condition within the processing vessel.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates which dries a surface of each of the substrates, the device comprising:
a processing vessel containing a cleaning fluid;
means for supporting substrates within the processing vessel;
means for relatively lowering a fluid face of the cleaning fluid within the processing vessel with respect to the substrates; and
means for introducing a drying fluid under a liquid condition within the processing vessel using a nozzle with the nozzle forming individual liquid drops of the drying fluid and supplying the liquid drops of the drying fluid onto the fluid face of the cleaning fluid,
the nozzle having drying fluid blowing holes a number of which is greater than a number of the substrates by 1, and the substrates being dried simultaneously.

22. (Previously Presented) A device for drying substrates as set forth in claim 10, further comprising
means for supplying inert gas to the nozzle so as to flow the drying fluid by a pressure of the inert gas.

23 - 28. (Cancelled)